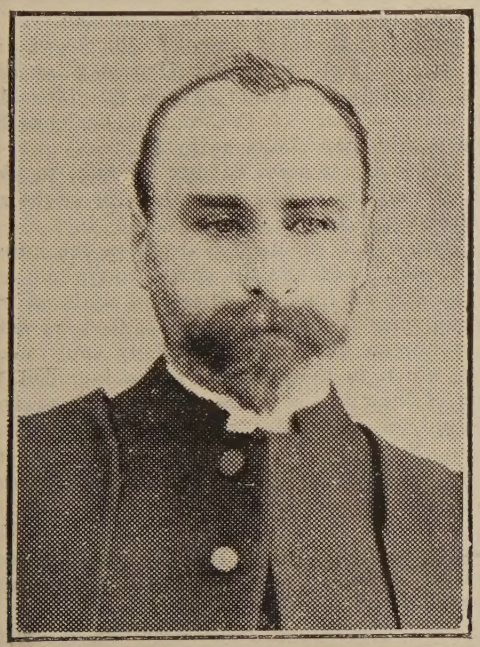
THE

# UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

No. 48. [Vol. IV.—9.] September, 1907. ONE PENNY.



## REV. JOHN BARRON,

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.

Born at Edinburgh, reared in Cumberland, descended through long line of "canny Fife folk" devoted to the Kirk from the days of the Covenanters; trained under strong religious influences in the doctrines of the Scottish Church in similar home conditions to those described in George Macdonald's "Robert Falconer"; his grandparents intimately acquainted with Drs. Guthrie and Chalmers and other eminent Scotch divines; under the strong personal influence of a Sunday School Teacher and a well-known orthodox minister, his bent towards becoming a minister was greatly strengthened; but the "New Theology" of Henry Ward Beecher's later days had its effect on the development of his doctrinal views; for some years later on it happened that he had unpleasant experiences with extreme Calvinists who took their stand on the three Rs—"Ruined by the Fall, Redeemed by the Blood, and Regenerated by the Holy Ghost"; ultimately found his way into Unitarianism, passed through the Theological course of instruction at the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, and afterwards became minister, in 1894, of the congregation which meets in the Abbey Chapel, Tavistock, Devon, where he had a fruitful ministry, remaining until April, 1907, when he removed to enter on his appointment as minister of the Richmond Hill Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, commencing his duties at the opening of the new church building. Mr. Barron's preaching is "Yea" rather than "Nay"; he is somewhat of a mystic with theosophic sympathies. In Devonshire he was two years Moderator of the West of England Assembly of Presbyterian (mainly Unitarian) Divines, Assembly Scribe five years, and was Secretary, Devon Ministers' Conference. In Tavistock, he was one of the Town Library Executive and served on several public committees. His wife was Miss L. M. Freeston, a near relative of the late Rev. Joseph Freeston.

## Varieties.

I BELIEVE that man is created immortal, that the punishment of the wicked hereafter will be remedial, and that all will be finally happy.

The Fatherhood of God involves the idea of the perfect felicity of his children.

If a being of infinite goodness and love controls the boundless universe, we cannot but cherish the hope that such goodness and love will overcome all evil.

All rational creatures will be happy for ever in the enjoyment of their Father's love.

—Dr. Samuel Davidson.

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The true test of civilisation is not the census, not the size of its cities, nor the shops, but the kind of men the country turns out.—Emerson.

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Children of men, not that your age excel
In pride of life the ages of your sires,
But that you think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well,
The Friend of Man desires.

—Matthew Arnold.

## His Faith.

So he died for his faith. That is fine;
More than most of us do.
But, say, can you add to that line
That he lived for it, too?

In his death he bore witness at last
As a martyr to truth.
Did his life do the same in the past,
From the days of his youth?

It is easy to die. Men have died
For a wish or a whim,
For bravado, or passion, or pride.
Was it harder for him?

But to live—every day to live out
All the truth that he dreamt,
While his friends met his conduct with doubt,
And the world with contempt.

Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
Never turning aside?
Then, we'll talk of the life that he lived;
Never mind how he died. —Ernest Crosby.

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## A Letter to the "Van" Mission.

The following was received by the Missionary Agent in charge of the Van Mission:—

"Now I believe argument on the question will not and cannot set you and me at one on this subject, so I will set myself to appeal to you, on behalf of God—on behalf of humanity, on behalf of yourself. If God is being misrepresented and discredited by your doctrine, you yourselves will be very sorry, for you believe in God, and in His love. But is it not possible that it may be so? Is God's love not great enough for Him to come among men in human form? Is it not great enough for Him to yield Himself in that form to be slain that He might rise again from the dead? Is His love or our understanding to be the greater? If He has died and has risen from the dead, is it not a greater argument for the fact of His love than any other known to men? Why should you wish to make it out that God has not come in human form into the world in the person of Jesus? It is admitted on all hands that self-sacrificing love is the most potent of all persuasives. Why should God be denied this power? And why should this greatest of all motives be denied to those of our fellow-men who are lowest sunk in sin—the only lever left to raise them? The most likely of all things to make them hate their sin.

Does God require us to be humble, and will we deny to Him the power to humble Himself so low as the Cross of Calvary?

Is there not in you and me a foul, fiendish selfishness that asserts itself sometimes? Can we not imagine that some exasperation might arise that would not be quelled except by the thought of 'the Cross of Christ my God'?"

In that letter there are no less than eleven questions, not one of which can be satisfactorily answered except at some length. Let us take them in order.

(1) Is God misrepresented and discredited by Unitarian doctrine?

He is not. Answers to following questions will throw some light on the subject:

(2) Is God's love not great enough for Him to come among men in human form?

Yes. He does come among men in human form, not only when Jesus came, but in every human being. Unitarians say that God is within every man, that the human soul is His abode where He dwells in greatest fulness. In this, Unitarian teaching represents God as He is represented by Jesus, Paul, and others in the New Testament Scriptures, and consequently that teaching is real Christianity. "Ye are the temple of God" (I. Cor. iii., 16, 17; vi., 19; II. Cor. vi., 16; Eph. ii., 21-2). Men may be filled "with all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii., 19). Man is "the image of God" (I. Cor. xi., 7). God has His kingdom within man (Luke xvii., 21).

(3) Is His love not great enough for Him to yield Himself in that form to be slain that He might rise again from the dead?

Yes. But only so much of Himself as the human form can hold. God fills all space, the whole universe, and fills all human bodies and souls as part of His universe. And so much of God as takes abode in human form inspires a holy soul to self-sacrifice, which in many martyrs has included the suffering of their bodies to be slain for the welfare of mankind, of which Jesus is the greatest of all examples. But what is it that is slain? Not the soul. Not God in human form. Only the "form" of the human, the fleshly body in which God had dwelt. It is that body that becomes dead—not God—not even the human soul that was in the body. God cannot be slain. He is immortal, imperishable, unchangeable; and so the Scriptures teach.

(4) Is His love or our understanding to be the greater?

His love—because that is infinite, whereas our understanding is limited. But that does not mean that such understanding as His love gives us is worthless and not to be trusted. Without our understanding we should know nothing of His love. Without our understanding the meaning of His love would never reach our hearts. If we cannot understand that His love is great, it is of no value to us. The use of our understanding is the way of knowing God and of knowing anything. If we would know what is true, we must understand it. We can only know that any doctrine is true by understanding it, by judging it. "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right!" said Jesus. "Be fully assured in your own minds," said Paul. It is impossible to say even "Amen!" to anything we cannot understand (I. Cor. xiv., 16). "Be not children in understanding . . . but in understanding be men" (20).

So woe unto him who despises understanding! for he cannot know either the love of God or the love of Christ.

(5) If He has died and has risen from the dead, is it not a greater argument for the fact of His love than any other known to men?

It is no argument at all. The only kind of argument it implies is this:

God loves mankind because God lives.

God consented to die.

Therefore God's love for mankind died. An argument that does not prove God's love. God cannot die, nor can He cease to love. The fact that He cannot die is a far greater argument for the fact of His love than any death of God could be.

(6) Why should you wish to make it out that God has not come in human form into the world in the person of Jesus?

That is just what Unitarians do NOT wish to make out. We say that God did come in human form in every man, and in largest measure in the most perfect man, Jesus Christ. But we say that Jesus Christ did not contain all of God, and when the fleshly body of Jesus died on the Cross it was not God that died.

(7) Why should God be denied the power of self-sacrificing love?

Yes, indeed, why? Who does deny it? Not Unitarians. They affirm it most strongly. They say that all self-sacrificing love comes from God, and is inspired of Him, and that it is the most wonderful power that He exerts. He patiently bears the disobedience of sinners, the selfishness of the selfish, the oppression of the oppressors, and the long delays of human ignorance and the knowledge of all the misery and wretchedness in the world consequent thereon—because His patience and forbearance are for the good of humanity. He is a long-suffering God: "despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. ii., 4; see also ix., 22-24). And does not God love His enemies and do good to those who hate Him and despitefully use Him? (Matt. vi., 44-5; Luke vi., 27-36). But they who say that God has no patience and no love for the sinner in the life beyond the grave—it is they who deny to God this power of self-sacrificing love.

(8) Why should this greatest of all motives—the knowledge of God's self-sacrificing love—be denied to those of our fellow-men who are lowest sunk in sin—the only lever left to raise them?

They are not denied this. But it would be denied them if they knew that God could die, could cease to live, and therefore cease to love. It would be denied them if they were heathens who never heard of Christ, and if God had no love whatever for them except through a knowledge of Christ.

(9) Will we deny to God the power to humble Himself so low as the Cross of Calvary?

All power comes from God. There is no real strength or power of any kind which He has not Himself created; so no man can deny to God any power that really exists. He does humble Himself in stooping to lift man upwards, and as much of God as was in Jesus on the Cross, and in Latimer at the stake, had humbled itself to lift up mankind. But Unitarians deny a human statement that all of God was in Jesus on the Cross, or that God was there slain.

(10) Is there not in you and me a foul, fiendish selfishness that asserts itself sometimes?

Foulness and fiendishness are introduced into man by foul and fiendish conditions originating, no doubt, from human ignorance rather than from evil intent. There is nothing in human nature itself that is foul or fiendish. Human nature is essentially good; "for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xix., 14). Selfishness is foreign to unspoiled human nature. Unless it be contaminated and corrupted by selfish surroundings, it is naturally unselfish.

(11) Can we not imagine that some exasperation might arise that would not be quelled except by the thought of "the Cross of Christ my God?"

Such exasperation could be quelled as much, if not more, by the life of Jesus than by his death. Had there been no Cross of Calvary, the example of his love and the inspiration of his life would exercise their power. If exasperation comes to professing Christians who know of the death of Jesus on the Cross, and who have been reconciled, brought into harmony with God, by that martyrdom, "much more shall they be saved by his life" (Rom. v., 10). When Jesus appealed to his hearers to "Love your enemies," there was no "Cross of Calvary" to influence them. He appealed to the love of God in their hearts that they should be perfect, as the heavenly Father is perfect. The phrase "Christ my God" is unscriptural, and misrepresents the real Gospel, the teaching of Jesus himself.

The writer of that letter should study the Scriptures more thoroughly. If he does, he will find that it is his doctrine, and not that of Unitarians, that misrepresents and discredits God. He pictures God sacrificing Himself to Himself; he makes God weaker than man when saying that it was possible for man to kill God—otherwise the sacrifice is a pretence and make-believe. He needs to think more clearly and more kindly, too, of God, if he would know the truth. And then when he finds that he has misrepresented and discredited God, he will be very sorry. He should remember the injunction of Paul: "Be not children in understanding . . . but in understanding be men."

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I am often called to see the dying or the bereaved. Once I was afraid to go, would postpone it till I could think of the right thing to say. Now I go at once, because I know that the right thing will be given me in that hour. And the promise of the Master seems to be verified: "Take no thought what to say or speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye ought to say."

—J Freeman Clarke.

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"What I kept, that I left;
What I gave, that I have."

## How I became a Unitarian.—(vii.)

### FROM METHODISM TO UNITARIANISM, BY THE REV. H. FISHER SHORT.

In inviting me to make a small contribution to his live little monthly, the editor has "set a bound that I may not pass over," hence this story of my theological pilgrimage must be very fragmentary. To-day I am a Unitarian; ardent, almost fanatical. The name Unitarian, to many "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," is to me most precious. As representing the principles and ideals I have learnt to love, and the heroic band of truth-seekers and truth-lovers with whom I count it an honour to be associated, this name is to me "a name above every name." Let who will call himself Free Christian, or Free Catholic, or even Philaletheian; for me the name Unitarian is sufficient. We cannot have anything better than the best. And, if this name embraces the best covered by those other names, as for me it does, it were unwise to try to evade it, disloyal to effect to despise it. And now to my story. At about fifteen years of age, I was converted. In Methodist parlance, I "gave my heart to the Lord." And this was the turning point of my life. It gave an impetus to my whole being, and provided a focus for its energies. Speedily I was put into harness, and soon was hard at work teaching in the Sunday School, conducting the Band of Hope, and even preaching. By and by, I became one of a little brotherhood of youths bent on reclaiming a lost and rebellious world for Christ; and it occurred to some of our elders that we were just the material for the making of Methodist ministers. With this end in view, our pastor formed us into a class for the study of grammar, elocution, and theology. And then my trouble began. Looking backward I can see that it was this Methodist class that made me a Unitarian. I began to think, and thinking is fatal to orthodoxy. The first seed of heresy was sown by our minister. During a lesson on the creation of Eve, he warned us against reading the narrative literally. The true view was, not that Eve was a transformed rib, but was mysteriously formed from Adam's vital substance. This was a shock to me. It looked like taking liberties with the Word of God. By and by, however, I was impressed by its reasonableness. But by calling in reason as the interpretor of Scripture, our mentor had placed in my hands a key that led to my undoing. If this account was metaphorical I naturally concluded that the stories of Noah's Ark, Balaam's Ass, Jonah's Great Fish, and many others that had puzzled me must yield to a like understanding. And almost without my being aware of it, my attitude towards the Bible underwent a radical change. This was my first step from Methodism. A much greater step was to follow. Having attained to some measure of independent thinking, I one day found myself confronted by two great alternatives; namely, everlasting punishment, or "God is love." And what this meant to me, no free-born Unitarian can possibly realise. Limits of space forbid my telling all I then experienced of my own private wrestlings, of earnest conversations with ministers and others, of my examination before the Quarterly Meeting, of the suspicion I aroused, and the contempt in which I was held. However, I determined to know, if possible, on which side truth lay, and so set myself to read everything I could find dealing with the subject. I read Farrar's "Eternal Hope," Cox's "Salvator Mundi," Jukes' "Restitution of All Things," Allin's "Universalism Asserted," and "Theologies" by Hodge, Cooke, Gregory,. Field, and others. Whenever I heard of a book dealing with either side of the controversy, I procured and read it eagerly. One day, I learnt from an advertisement that Stopford Brooke's "Eternal Punishment" could be had for the asking. I sent for it, and found just the help I needed. In a passage that burnt itself into my memory, I read "If God cannot save, what becomes of his omnipotence; if God will not save, what becomes of his love; and if love be violated, what becomes of his justice?" This was enough. To this, all my reading and study had tended. Henceforth, I was convinced that the dogma of everlasting punishment was false and blasphemous. Moreover, I found that in my quest for truth, I had come to hold "unsound" views on almost every doctrine of the orthodox scheme. Verbal Inspiration had quite gone. Total Depravity and Inability, Vicarious Atonement, and Salvation by Faith did not appear to be true. And upon these matters also, thanks to Miss Barmby of the Postal Mission, I began to find satisfaction. Having tasted the nourishing pabulum of Unitarianism, I hungered for more and received it in liberal supplies. I remember with what joyous gratitude I read Sunderland's "Was Jesus God?" Gaskell's "The Person of Christ," Walters' "The Bible a Human Book," Perry's "Unitarianism an Affirmative Faith,." Armstrong's "Principles and Ideals of Unitarians," and very many more. On such a diet, I was not long in becoming a quite lusty heretic and was at last compelled to admit that I was a Unitarian. But let it not be thought that my pilgrimage was like a holiday tour through pleasant places under a July sky. I know something of sleepless nights, of an aching head, aye, and an aching heart. I did not run with gladness to the nearest Unitarian Chapel as to a City of Refuge. Something seemed to hold me back, and I longed to find some justification for remaining among the friends I knew and continuing the work I loved. Hence, when I read a review of a book, "The Creed of the Christian," by Canon Gore,—a book described as dealing with orthodox essentials in a rational way, I was hopeful of finding rest within Methodism. But I was bitterly disappointed. A less convincing book I have rarely seen. Later, I came upon another glowing review. This time Frank Ballard, M.A., B.Sc., etc., was the author, and his book "Reasonable Orthodoxy." Again, my hopes rose high, and again they were dashed to the ground. I looked for bread, but found only stones of evasion, and casuistry, and special pleading. The book was neither reasonable orthodoxy, nor reasonable anything else. And so, at last, in January, 1896, with great reluctance, and not a little appre-

hension, I went out of Methodism not knowing whither I went. But, to conclude, I found in Unitarianism a God I could serve and worship; a Christ I could follow and love; a Bible I could read with real profit, and a glowing faith in all that is good, and true, and lovely.

## Whose Business?

Of course, the Lord's business.

And somebody else's too.

God and man are in partnership.

God will do His part; that can safely be left to Him; but he will not do man's part as well. If man does not attend to his part of the Lord's business that goes undone.

This was pretty plainly understood one Sunday morning in a certain church, in a talk between the minister and the Sunday School superintendent after service.

The Church members had voted to have regular morning service instead of afternoon.

So morning service had been instituted.

Some of the adult members came at first, but most of them gradually ceased to come, and the morning congregation was mainly scholars, a few teachers, the superintendent, and about three other adults.

A.B., the minister, was going to be away. So he asked the superintendent if he would take morning service for him, which he was well able to do.

B.C., the superintendent, agreed to do it for the minister's sake, but with a protest.

It was not a protest against the minister; far from it; but against the adult members who stayed away.

"If it were not for you," said B.C., "I should refuse. The adult members voted for the morning service, but they don't come; and they voted to ask me to attend to the duties of superintendent, and they leave me to it. I know of at least a score of people who could come to morning service as well as I can, and people who voted at members' meeting too. They send their children here for me and others to look after, and they never come themselves. It's not right."

"It is not right," said the Minister. "But what can I do?"

"Do? Why, you cannot do more than you have done. But I know this, that it is their business as much as it's mine, and when I see some of them I shall tell them plainly what I think about it."

"I hope you will. You can do it better than I," said the minister. "If I gave them a good talking to about it they would only misunderstand me and put it down to personal motives. But it is their business quite as much as it's mine, though I am the minister; and they would see it so if they took a proper interest in their own boys and girls, and thought anything of the force of their own personal example. They little know how much good their example would do if only they came regularly and were seen in their places; and they do not think what bad results will come of their careless example in staying away. Their absence preaches at their children and their neighbours more powerfully than the preacher's sermons—but in the wrong direction. And they need not be surprised if their children follow their example and keep away from service as soon as they can, like their parents."

Yes, it is THEIR business. God never helps able people who will not help themselves in a way that is helpful to others. God cannot make even a church prosper if the people whose Church it is will not put themselves out of the way to help it on. And people who leave their own share of duty to be done by others must not be surprised if it is not done at all, and have no right to grumble if it is not done. Their week-day business neglected this way would soon be bankrupt. The way to make a really live church is to take a live interest in it. And a live church is a wonderful protection to the young, a splendid safeguard to the youths and maidens, a grand comfort to fathers and mothers, a real sanctuary and power of blessing to old men and women. And a church which is not all that, is not so because its people who profess to belong to it neglect to make it so by their LIVING presence.

But parson A.B. had a dream. It was a day-dream. B.C., the superintendent, had been as good as his word. He had spoken plainly, just as he knew how to speak, to many of the adult members. He had wakened them up. And the result was that a few zealous members went round on a visit to all the other members. And they said:

"We have joined the Sunday Morning Service League. We have come to ask you to be Sunday Morning Leaguers too. For the sake of our young people! For the sake of the few faithful souls who have been holding the fort so long, and doing our work as well as their own! For the sake of our Church from which we have all received so much in the past. For your own sakes! And for the sake of many others who will follow where you will lead! For this church business is your business. And do not let the voice of God call you to be His fellow-labourers—and call to you in vain.

And the Sunday Morning Leaguers did it. They actually—themselves—made a strong morning congregation. And this strong morning congregation made a stronger evening congregation. It inspired the minister to preach sermons more eloquent, as their presence was bound to. It kept the young people in better order and strengthened their faith in church-going. It made the mothers and fathers happier. And all because they had the practical common sense to recognise that this was really their own business, and did it.

But was this only a dream? or was it reality?

In any case let us hope it was a dream that came true. It was one that deserved fulfilment.

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Better have failed in the high aim, as I
Than vulgarly in the low aim succeed,
As, God be thanked, I do not.

—Robert Browning.

## O Brother Man!

O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother!
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there.
To worship rightly is to love each other—
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.
—Whittier.

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## For All or None.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle."

### CHAPTER VIII.

Ralph Rendel the heretic had not ceased attending the chapel. He was still drawn there by the influence of old association and by family ties. And he was not out of sympathy with the spirit of real religion which he often felt in hymn and prayer, in psalm and parable and sermon, though now more than ever points of doctrine jarred unpleasantly upon his moral sense.

That "fireman and dog" incident, and the currents of thought it had set going, along with his little altercation with the minister, had wrought more change in his way of looking at things than he himself was really conscious of. Expressions against which hitherto he had felt no objection now appeared in a new light. As with a sudden flash he discovered meanings which were now repugnant to his mind and heart.

One week he attended the Wednesday night prayer meeting. His entrance caused surprise to the few who were present, and some of them thought it might be a good omen—that it was a sign that he was coming to his right mind.

The minister began with a brief devotional address, at the close of which he offered prayer. Then others present prayed in turn, until there was a pause. It was as if the meeting were waiting for another to pray; and after a silent interval the minister said:

"Perhaps brother Rendel will pray with us."

And Ralph did pray:

"Oh, Lord God! Thy Spirit intercedes with our spirits and calls us to pour forth our thoughts and feelings unto Thee. Thou lookest upon us in our needs with the compassion of a Father. When we do the things we ought not to do, Thou seest us with divine and tender pity for our shortcomings. And we would ask Thee to forgive us our sins, not only for Christ's sake, but for our own sakes; not only for what Jesus did, but because of our deep need, and because of our repentance.

"We thank Thee for the love that was in Jesus Christ. Thou didst love him. He was Thy beloved son. But Thou lovest us also. We also are Thy children, Thy sons and daughters. And we ask Thee to bless us with pure minds and right feeling, and with rich abundance of Thy wisdom from above, not only because of the love Thou hast to Jesus Christ, but because of the love Thou hast for us. Not for any merit of ours, O Lord, nor even for the merit of another, may Thy blessing be granted unto us, but with loving compassion for our deep necessities Thou wilt grant our request as it seemeth good to Thee. For Thou lovest us all alike, and Thou art no respecter of persons, and Thou forgettest none, and all are equally precious to Thee. May we trust, O Lord, in Thine infinite love, and cast ourselves upon Thy boundless compassion, and in the strength of Thy Fatherly help may we have grace to turn from our sin and our selfishness and tread the heavenly path of righteousness and truth, so that, with pure hearts and holy minds, we may follow the example of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen!"

After this a hymn was sung. And then the minister invited any of those present to open their minds about any religious difficulties they felt. And to his surprise one member said:

"I am puzzled to know how far we must rely on the merits of Jesus Christ. We have always been taught to ask God to grant our prayers 'for Christ's sake.' Oughtn't we always to do so?"

"There is no doubt, my friend," said the minister, "that any prayer is more effectual if it be offered up in the name of Christ."

But the puzzled brother asked again:

"Sometimes we sing:

'We bow before Thy gracious throne,
And offer up our prayer,
Do thou, for Jesus' sake alone,
Thy blessings ever shower down
On all whose gifts we share.'

And 'for Jesus' sake alone' are words that I do not understand as much as I want to do. If I could get any light on them I should be greatly helped."

"The matter is simply this, my friend," replied the minister: "All mankind are guilty of sin in Adam and incurred the wrath of God. But Jesus came and gave himself a sacrifice to take God's wrath away and to purchase His love. It is therefore in Christ alone that we have hope of God's forgiveness. And so we ask God to forgive us for Christ's sake."

"There was something, sir, in brother Rendel's prayer which seemed a bit strange———"

"We must not discuss brother Rendel's prayer. It would not be a seemly thing to do. And it would only lead to useless argument and perhaps unpleasant contention," said the minister rather firmly.

Ralph Rendel ventured never a word. The minister pronounced the benediction and the meeting dispersed.

And next morning the sun shone brightly, as it had shone in Judea and Galilee, and in all parts of the world, filling the earth with goodness from God, and making glad the hearts of His children, before Jesus came and before any purchase of God's love "through Christ" was ever thought of.

And Jesus himself pictured the heavenly Father sending His sun to shine upon all—not for any sacrifice offered up to Him, but because he loveth all. It was Ralph Rendel, Jesus, and God on one side, and the minister and his creed on the other.

(To be continued.)

## Good Work Lives on for Ever.

A painter was lodging in a cottage in the country. Every day he went out to paint the view from the hill side. He was very poor and it was of great consequence to him that he should succeed in painting a picture which would make him known; but he was much disheartened about his work. It seemed as if he never could succeed. After a while he lost patience with his picture; he put it away, and used to take a book and go to the woods and spend the whole day in reading. One day when he was going out, and had to pass through the little sitting-room of the cottage, he stopped to look at a sampler which hung over the fire-place. The sampler had on it the letters of the alphabet and a row of figures, and the name and age of the worker, "Sarah Short, aged 7 years," and right down at the bottom there was written on the frame, "I have tried to work this well, for Daddy said 'Good work lives on for ever.'" The painter read these words and turned away. Then he went back and read them again.

The next morning he took his unfinished picture to the hill side and worked at it with a will to which he had been a stranger many a day. He worked carefully, many a bit he painted out and painted in again, and often he was dissatisfied with his day's work; but still he went on and on. It seemed as if there was something new in his heart that he painted into his picture. At last the picture was done, and when one looked at it, one fancied one could hear the birds sing and feel the sweet summer air. After a while he left the cottage and carried his picture to London. Soon news came that everyone was talking about the 'great' picture that hung on the wall of the Exhibition. The painter walked into the cottage one day, and as he looked at the sampler again, he said, "I owe my success to that old sampler. It taught me that fame and gain are, after all, small reasons for setting to work, but that the hope of doing good work that may last for ever helps to get good work done."

—From Mrs. CLIFFORD'S "Anyhow Stories."

## Reverence.

It is not with the voice only that man communicates with man. Nothing is so eloquent as the deep silence of a crowd. A sigh, a low breathing, sometimes pours into us our neighbour's soul more than a volume of words. There is a communication more subtle than freemasonry between those who feel alike. How contagious is holy feeling! On the other hand, how freezing, how palsying is the gathering of a multitude who feel nothing, who come to God's house without reverence, without love, who gaze around on each other as if they were assembled at a show, whose restlessness keeps up a slightly disturbing sound, whose countenances reveal no collectedness, no earnestness, but a frivolous or absent mind! The very sanctity of the place makes this indifference more chilling. One of the coldest spots on earth is a church without devotion.—(Channing).

## What God is to the Unitarian.

It is agreed—almost universally—that there is some creating and controlling Power other and greater than man. Unitarians call that Power "God," a Being greater, holier, wiser, more loving, and more perfect than the human mind can conceive, and infinitely transcending that.

A consciousness of God is natural to man. Reason supports this intuition, the chief foundations upon which we base our arguments being:—

(1) The demand of the human understanding for a Living Cause behind all things.

(2) The demand of the human conscience for a Living Righteousness behind the moral law, and,

(3) The demand of the human soul for a Living Love behind things sublime and beautiful.

Modern Science has proved that all the forces of the world are only varieties and manifestations of one force. We accept, therefore, the watchword of Moses "The Lord our God is one," a pronouncement confirmed by Jesus (Mark xii., 29).

We respond to that mighty utterance of the Master Prophet, "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv., 24). We affirm John's conviction that "God is Love" (I. John iv., 8). We echo the great saying of Paul "To us there is one God, the Father" (I. Cor. viii., 6), and we note with satisfaction that there are 17 passages in the New Testament in which the Father is styled the "One or only God."

Unitarians believe, then, that there is some one Being, one Mind, one Person, one Self, one intelligent agent, and one only to whom underived and infinite perfection belongs; that this Being is the infinitely wise, great and good Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the Omnipresent Spirit; that His highest attribute is love, and that His best name is "Father." From Him all our souls descended, and to Him we owe our being, our blessings, our hopes, and our future. He is the universal Father, not merely the Father of the "elect," not merely the Father of Christians, not merely the Father of civilised people, but the Father of all men—equally lovingly, tenderly, the Father of all men.

In one word: we believe that God is the Universal Father Almighty. From this we infer that man possesses a nature similar in kind to that of his Creator, to whom we ascribe not only the name, but the dispositions and principles of a father. We believe that He has a father's concern for his children, a father's desire for their improvement, a father's fairness in proportioning his commands to their powers, a father's readiness to receive the penitent, and a father's justice for the incorrigible.

This conception of God as Father—the dominant and central thought of the religion of Jesus—is the touchstone by which Unitarians test all other religious doctrines. We do not take to our hearts and cherish any doctrine that is inconsistent with this cardinal article of the primitive Christian faith.

—CENTONARIUS.

## Postal Mission Work.

By Rev. R. Newell (Suffolk Village Missionary).

The Suffolk Village Mission is a branch of the work of the Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union. It comes under the third object of that Society, namely: "Practical and Pioneer Unitarian Missionary Work (religious, educational, benevolent, and social)." It began in 1892, with the labours of the Rev. Alfred Amey, now at Pudsey, and formerly Unitarian itinerent minister at Framlingham (a Postal Mission Convert). The Postal Mission came to his aid in 1895, knowing the difficulties he was struggling with, both on account of lack of funds and suitable building accommodation. I was appointed village missionary at the beginning of 1903, and am now in charge of the work. There are two centres, the Old Meeting House at Framlingham—a Presbyterian foundation dating from 1662—and the Mission Chapel at Bedfield, erected 1895. South of Framlingham, within a few miles, are a number of villages, Parham, Kettlebrough, Charsfield, Wickham Market, etc., where the influence of the Missionary has been exerted; but the villages surrounding Bedfield are more completely effected by the Mission. The congregation of from 50 to 70, meeting regularly for worship in the chapel there, come from Bedfield, Monk Soham, Worlingworth, Bedingfield, Saxstead, and even occasionally from Debenham, Horham, and Laxfield, which are seven or more miles away. Bedfield is considered the real head-quarters of the Mission, and it is in fact the centre of Mid-Suffolk, a purely agricultural district, and a long distance from the railways. The building is an iron structure, and serves the purpose not only of a place of worship, but of a club room and place of entertainment during the winter evenings. This is the only place of resort in the village, except the public house, and the Men's Club has now grown so much that the need is felt of larger premises. The Central Postal Mission is therefore erecting another room to communicate with the present building, to serve as a refreshment room and additional place of entertainment. The villagers are most eager for the completion of this new room, and have worked heart and soul for a sale of work, in order to be able to contribute to the building fund. It is hoped that the room will be ready by the anniversary meetings on October 20th, and that it will be opened free of debt.

I hold cottage services during the autumn and winter months in adjoining villages, occasionally with the aid of a portable lantern to illustrate the subject. Regular services are held on Sundays in the two chapels at Bedfield and Framlingham, and in the summer time occasional outdoor services on the village greens. It is worth notice that whereas only about 50 come to an ordinary indoor service on a Sunday afternoon, at the last outdoor service there came nearly 200 people to listen. In many respects Suffolk villages are unlike other villages; they bear the record of age upon them, and the inhabitants seem like an ancient people, some of the dwellings seem to have survived from early Saxon times, they are built of clay lumps, wattled and plastered, and they are not, as a rule, clustered together, but scattered over a wide area, and attached to the farms at which the tenants find work. The villages, too, are greatly depopulated, consequently it is difficult to get a crowd. According to my experience, the most effective way is by a liberal distribution of handbills throughout a group of villages beforehand, announcing that on a certain green a meeting will be held, and the people will come, but even then the villager has a way of his own: he will loiter about or stand afar off, waiting suspiciously to see if any crowd is likely; then he will stroll carelessly by, and eventually with his company deposit himself in the hedge-side away from the crowd, apparently indifferent, for these strollers carry on their conversation as if they had no interest in the meeting; but nevertheless they are listening to the preacher, who speaks up, and they enjoy the music. This hint may be useful to the Van Mission when it goes to Suffolk next year.

The social side of the Mission is being attended to. There is the Men's Club. The room is open to all who will pay the 6d. for the session, whether they attend the Sunday services or not. Amusements, games, reading, lantern lectures, and instruction in whatever the members can be induced to take up, reading, writing, arithmetic, etc., some few have been taught to play the violin, or the fife. Tea-parties are encouraged, and open-nights are arranged for entertainments, to which those who are not members are invited. There is a Penny Savings Bank, and a Girls' Provident Clothing Club, which, by a small weekly contribution from members, and a bonus, provides the outfit when the girls go to domestic service. There is also a Sick Club, in connection with which articles needed in cases of sickness are lent, and medical attendance is occasionally provided. The children are not neglected; the Sunday School at Bedfield has 48 names on the register, and there is a Children's Hour every week. The Missionary watches Parish affairs. He is about the only one who dares protest against abuse of power, so great is the fear of the powers that be. He also interests himself in the efforts of the people to improve their circumstances by the cultivation of gardens and allotments, and the production of eggs. A small flower show was held in the spring for bulb-plants, and some excellent specimens were shown. The eggs, to the number of about 1,200 weekly, are at present disposed of through the nearest Co-operative Society, but an endeavour is now maturing for the organisation of a Poultry and Produce Club, so that direct supply to families in London and the large towns may soon be announced. The Government's Small Holdings' Bill is being looked to as a likely help to the betterment of the labourers.

The people are very poor. Wages in Suffolk are extremely low, and their education has been sadly

neglected. It is surprising what a number of young men cannot write, or read—they seem to have forgotten all they learnt at school, through ignoring it ever since they left. Some are discovering their error, and now seeking to improve, but they are few.

The circumstances of the poor who attend the services, do not permit them to contribute much, and there are no wealthy people belonging to the congregation. The Mission must depend for its existence on help from outside. The Central Postal Mission undertakes the responsibility of the maintenance, aided by a grant from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Subscriptions and donations would be welcome from those in sympathy with this village mission work.

R. NEWELL.

## Notes and News.

112 British Unitarians are booked for U.S.A. to attend the International Congress of Unitarians and Liberal Thinkers, at Boston, in September, including 58 ministers.

It is said that a Chinese newspaper has just reached its five hundredth year. Be that as it may—"The Unity" reaches its fifth year with its October issue, and wins more and more support.

The Rev. John Page Hopps, prince of propagandists, has taken a great theatre opposite to St. Pancras Station, London, for a series of special Sunday evening Unitarian services, to begin Oct. 27th. One hundred helpers will distribute invitations and book of hymns from house to house to 10,000 houses in the neighbourhood.

A Boys' Life Brigade is being established by the Brighton Unitarians to teach youths discipline and life-saving.

"The Christian Life," evidently fears that the National Conference Union for Social Service may lead its members into a belief in Socialism. Many of its members are Socialists who could easily tell the writer of the Editorial article of the "Life," Aug. 3rd, that he does not understand Socialism, else he would not misrepresent Socialism as he does. And is Socialism to be regarded as "heresy" by Unitarians who profess to seek new light and boast of intellectual liberty?

Any church desiring a parcel of "Unity" back numbers for gratuitous distribution can have the same for cost of carriage, by applying to the Editor.

The Rev. R .J. Campbell, M.A., of "New Theology" fame has promised to preach for the Chatham Unitarians in the autumn.

VAN MISSION.—The work of the Unitarian Vans proceeds with satisfactory results beyond all anticipation. In the first week of uninterrupted fine weather in July, the four vans held 21 meetings, with an aggregate attendance of 4,500 or an average of 214 per meeting. At Dunstable a man with a Bible persisted in reading aloud during the Missioner's address, adding a stream of abuse, denunciation, and ultra-orthodoxy, his parting words being "May the curse of God follow wherever your Van goes," which made people cry out "Shame!" The Rev. John Page Hopps was there one night, and he says that except in the far-off Orkneys and Shetland he "never met with such ardent zeal for hell and the eternal wrath of God," as at Dunstable. In another week, with no meetings on some days there were 22 meetings held, with gross attendance of 6,000, and average of 270 per meeting. At Hemel Hempstead there were over 1,000 present at one meeting. Hundreds of people lingered discussing until after eleven o'clock. Many complimentary things were said. "The Van had done more good than any of the Churches and Chapels" in the town—said some. On the other hand a young woman tore up a Unitarian tract in the Missioner's face. Splendid meetings at Stoke-on-Trent. A week later 29 meetings totalled an attendance of 7,625, an average of 263 per meeting. Some very good meetings in Scotland. Experiences at Newcastle (Staffs) have been very gratifying. All sorts of theological questions are put by the audiences at the meetings. Courses of lectures and conferences are asked for at some places; in others the audiences insist on votes of thanks to the Van Missioners. Everywhere the result proves how very much needed this propagandist work is.

Mr. Victor Grayson, the newly-elected M.P. for the Colne Valley Division in the place of Sir James Kitson, raised to the peerage, is a Unitarian; he was quite recently a student for the ministry in the Unitarian Home Missionary College, and resigned in order to take up with politics.

The Rev. F. A. Homer has just been welcomed back a second time to the Ministry of the West Bromwich Unitarian Church, after a five years' absence. He was at West Bromwich, 1898-1902, when he resigned and went to Taunton.

"WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?" — An organist and choirmaster writes concerning the article on this subject in last issue, in reference to the only real point dealt with in the article, viz: Theological agreement —harmony of words and teaching between pulpit and choir—and says that any organist "would naturally desire to work harmoniously with his minister, and will from time to time (more especially in a Unitarian Church), submit the words of anthems for the approval of the occupant of the pulpit before placing them in rehearsal." Our correspondent has misunderstood some parts of the article. That "choir and pulpit should harmonise together" in theological doctrine is all that was meant, with no reference whatever either to any possible personal differences, or to choice of music. As to choir management this organist agrees with the article that the responsible "Court of Appeal" is the Committee, or Church Executive.

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